THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) While the provisional estimate of exports during 1994-95 from units under the EOU Scheme were Rs. 4500 crores, no target is laid down by the Government for exports from these units.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Child Labourers in the Country

*10. SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of child labourers is increasing in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to bring forward a Bill ensuring minimum wages for these child labourers;

(c) whether the Government propose to introduce compulsory education for these child labourers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) to (d) Authentic figures on child labour are generated during decennial census. According to 1981 census, the number of working children was 13.6 million. In the 43rd round of National Sample Survey conducted in 1987-88, the figure of child labour has been estimated to be 17.02 millions. The data on child labour as per 1991 census has not yet been released.

As employment of child labour is prohibited in hazardous employments and processes and is discouraged in non-hazardous ones, Government do not propose to have separate minimum wages for child labour.

Already many States have laws for compulsory primary education including for child-workers. The Government are also implementing development programmes for universalisation of elementary education. Further, provision of education, both non-formal and vocational, is one of the important inputs in the child labour elimination programme. A major activity undertaken under the National Child Labour Projects (NCLP) Scheme of the Ministry of Labour is establishment of special schools for the provisions of basic needs like non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition etc. to the children withdrawn from employment. Twelve such projects are under implementation in 8 States covering a total of approximately 16,000 children. During the current year, 63 additional proposals from 10 States have been cleared under NCLP covering a total of 1.20 lakh children.

Production of washed coal in CIL

*11. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the washed coal production of the washeries of subsidiaries of Coal India Ltd. has stagnated or shown a decline over the years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the capacity utilisation of such washeries is low;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor, steps taken or proposed to be taken to improve the performance of existing washeries and results thereof; and

(d) what has been the washery-wise production of coal and their capacity utilisation during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Main reasons for under utilisation of the capacity of existing washeries are as under:

(i) Most of the washeries are old and are designed to process better quality coals. Due to depletion of these reserves over the years, the ash content in the raw coal feed has increased affecting the performance of washeries considerably.